

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 00136 070006Z
ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 /022 W
-----070011Z 097511 /61

O R 062332Z JAN 77 ZZH
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2775
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0136

FOR TRANSITION TEAM S/CL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE LETTER FROM LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS
TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON PANAMA CANAL

1. I WAS CALLED IN TODAY BY THE UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, JOSE AYALA, FOR WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS "AN UNOFFICIAL CONSULTATION BETWEEN FRIENDS". HE SAID THAT THE COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT HAD DRAFTED A LETTER TO PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER ON THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS TO BE DELIVERED AFTER JANUARY 20. THE LETTER WOULD URGE THE NEW PRESIDENT TO GIVE A HIGH PRIORITY TO THE SPEEDY AND SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. THE LETTER CITES THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 1974 AND 1976 REPORTS OF THE LINOWITZ COMMISSION FAVORING A NEW CANAL TREATY. THE LETTER WOULD STATE THAT THE SUCCESSFUL AND EARLY CONCLUSION OF THE NEW TREATY WOULD REMOVE A MAJOR POINT OF FRICTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. AYALA ASKED ME FOR MY PERSONAL OPINION AS TO HOW SUCH A LETTER WOULD BE RECEIVED BY THE
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NEW ADMINISTRATION.

2. I TOLD HIM THAT, AS SOLICITED, I WAS GIVING HIM MY PERSONAL AND UNOFFICIAL OPINION. I SAID THAT THE LETTER'S RECEPTION WOULD DEPEND ENTIRELY ON THE LANGUAGE AND TONE. IF THE LETTER WERE COUCHED IN FRIENDLY TERMS AND WAS WITHOUT REPROACHES, THEN I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE WELL

RECEIVE. I POINTED OUT THAT THE INCOMING SECRETARY OF STATE HAD POINTED TO THE PANAMA CANAL PROBLEM AS A TOP PRIORITY FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, AND THAT I THEREFORE THOUGHT THAT THE INCOMING PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE VIEWS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS. I EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES DURING OUR CONVERSATION, HOWEVER, THAT THE LETTER WOULD HAVE TO BE FREE OF REPROACH AND BE COUCHED IN LANGUAGE THAT MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WAS ADVICE BEING PROFFERED BY FRIENDS WHO HAVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AT HEART.

3. THE UNDER SECRETARY TOLD ME THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE LETTER ALREADY HAD BEEN SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENTS OF MEXICO, VENEZUELA, COLOMBIA AND PERU. HE FELT THAT THESE PRESIDENTS WERE PARTICULARLY RESPECTED IN THE UNITED STATES AND THAT THEIR ADHERENCE TO THE LETTER WOULD ENHANCE ITS CHANCES OF BEING WELL RECEIVED. I AGREED. THE UNDER SECRETARY SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER PRESIDENT POVEDA SHOULD ALSO SIGN THE LETTER.

4. COMMENT. I HAVE THE FEELING FROM AYALA'S TONE THAT THE ECUADOREANS ARE INCLINED TO SIGN THE LETTER. HE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WERE QUITE ANXIOUS NOT TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD BEGIN RELATIONS WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ON A SOUR NOTE. IF IT IS FELT THAT MY ADVICE TO THE UNDER SECRETARY WAS WRONG, I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED IMMEDIATELY SO THAT I CAN CORRECT IT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, CANALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Executive Order: GS
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770175/aaaacnmu.tel
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Exemptions: n/a
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Review Release Date: n/a
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TAGS: PFOR, PPDC, US, XM, PQ, PN, (CARTER, JIMMY)
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Type: TE
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